

Arab Ba'th Socialist Party

HOW THE REVOLUTION CONFRONTS THE IMPERIALIST



CONSPIRACY AND THE COUNTER-REVOLUTION

Unity Freedom Socialism



**HOW THE REVOLUTION
CONFRONTS THE IMPERIALIST
AND COUNTER REVOLUTIONARY
CONSPIRACY**

Reference books:

About the October-war 1973

Pertinent problems and questions

*The Arab region: The current situation
and the prospect for the future*

Arab Ba'th Socialist Party

HOW THE REVOLUTION CONFRONTS THE IMPERIALIST AND COUNTER REVOLUTIONARY CONSPIRACY

**Political report approved
by the Iraqi Regional Directorate
of the Arab Ba'th
Socialist Party
November 1972**

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Editor's Note

The Arab Socialist Ba'th Party regards all Arabs as being part of one nation both in the cultural and spiritual sense. The different countries in which they live, make up a politically and economically united fatherland. In the Party's documents, 'the Arab fatherland' means all the Arab countries. Each of these is a 'qotr' which, literally translated, means country; in the Ba'th context, it should be read as province or region. The adjective 'Quotri' (provincial, regional) is used when referring to an individual country. The adjective 'qawmi' (national), on the other hand, is used when referring to all the countries which together make up the one fatherland. Thus, the National Directorate deals only with matters concerning the whole fatherland. Each Regional Directorate deals with matters within its own country. As for example, the Lebanese or Jordanian Regional Directorate deals with matters within its own country. As for example, the Lebanese or Jordanian Regional Directorate etc.

The word Ba'th can be translated as meaning revival, resurgence or renewal. Hitherto, resurgence seems to be the meaning which is preferred by Arab intellectuals and foreign Arab experts.

Preface

In mid-November 1972, the Iraqi Regional Committee of the Ba'th Arab and Socialist Party approved this political report which set out to analyse and expose the main factors of the political situation at that time. It was an attempt also to forecast possible moves by the counter-revolutionary camp against the Revolution and the whole of the Middle East. Finally, it tried to outline those policies which could lead to a successful stand against these possible moves.

The main points of the report were subsequently revised and finalised at the time of the 8th. Regional Congress in Iraq in January 1974, and included in its own official report. Both the Party and the Revolution considered that the methods proposed were effective, and were a useful guide for action to be followed by both parties, in their struggle with the counter-revolution and imperialism. It was also considered to be helpful for the promotion of those activities designed

to create an impregnable stronghold and bridgehead, in free Iraq, for the Arab revolutionary movement.

The report was first published on April 27th. 1974 in a special edition of the newspaper «Ath-Thawra», in commemoration of the 27th. anniversary of the founding of the Ba'th Party.

I

In order to have a clear picture of the various tactics which may be used against us and also of the best methods for dealing with them, we have to study current political events carefully and methodically and to draw our conclusions accordingly. We have, therefore, given the closest attention to this important problem.

Only a part of this report will be describing counter-revolutionary activities. Our starting point must be to determine whether or not there is a conspiracy against the Revolution. We believe that it is inevitable that any genuine revolution, which fulfils its promise and objectives, has to face attack from hostile elements both internally and externally. Given this permanent fact of life, we must identify accurately and clearly the anti-revolutionary forces, analyse their methods of attack, and foresee the different techniques which they may adopt in the future. These steps must be repeated as the Revolution progresses

through successive decisive stages, and also at various points in time within each stage.

After having determined the identity of the counter-revolution, we then have to draw up plans to foil them, to dislodge them from their positions and to neutralise those elements which may have established themselves in the country.

As a result of our having signed the Iraqi-Soviet Treaty of Friendship and of having nationalised the oil industry, this problem must now be tackled in a very different way from that of the past. In the period before these two important decisions were taken, anti-revolutionary activities were confined to one dimension and to an area; in other words, to the Arab countries and the Middle East as a whole. Whereas today, since these two major events, the field of action has been enlarged to cover a great part of the world. Both in planning and execution it is now on an international scale, after previously having been restricted to the actual area of the revolution.

The colonialists, the imperialists and their allies throughout the world consider Iraq today as having passed «the limit» regarded as acceptable for a revolution, and as having reached the point of being classified as a «new-type revolution». Imperialism had never before had to face a thing like this, although it had previous experience of coups d'état and semi-revolutions; our own party, both in Iraq and Syria*, has had similar experiences.

When Iraq was transformed into a launching pad

* This refers to the revolution in Iraq (February 8th. 1963) and in Syria (March 8th. 1963) when the Ba'th party took over power almost simultaneously in both countries.

for a «new-type revolution», it was logical and normal that she should join forces with the world revolution and become the cynosure of all those nations who have given her their support. This, in itself, has weakened the imperialist position in this part of the world.

Iraq, through these two decisions, has raised herself to the international level. It is the first time, since the Cuban revolution, that a new government of a country of ten million inhabitants, has drawn the attention of so much of the world to itself, and is receiving ever increasing support from other countries in the struggle. The imperialists have seen in this a challenge which must be taken very seriously. They have been trying for some time and by every means, to persuade other nations, particularly in the vital Middle Eastern area, that revolutions of the Cuban pattern must not be repeated at this historical point.

The revolution in Iraq, because of its methods, has become a new phenomenon, and every effort is being made to hinder its development. In former times, revolutions could be easily neutralised by the «normalising» of relations and the establishment of a status quo, but this is now impossible after the oil nationalisation and the Soviet Treaty.

We may be justifiably proud of the way in which we have changed the situation through these two measures and thereby thrown the imperialists off-balance. For they had never envisaged that this government, no matter how ambitiously it may have talked, could ever have risen above the rest and made its voice heard in the world. They also made a serious mistake in trying to stifle the revolution by traditional methods, (as was the case with the «semi-revolutions»,

which even at their most successful, never carried out the promises made in their initial manifestoes).

It is also possible that, had the revolution failed, certain progressive groups would not even have published our obituary on the front pages of their newspapers, whereas today we believe that all these movements and groups would give us help if we ran into serious difficulties. This is one of the factors which makes it difficult for the imperialists to catch us unaware, but, at the same time, will not prevent them from finding new ways of opposing us.

After these preliminary remarks on the general situation, we must now turn to the main problem, but beforehand, in order to fill in more of the background, we should consider the effects of what is known as «détente», following Nixon's visit to the Soviet Union. The transformation of Iraq's revolutionary government from a local national régime into one with an international influence, means that it must be affected, positively or negatively, by major events on the international stage. After oil nationalisation and the Soviet Treaty, it is clear that the Nixon-Russian conversations will have an effect on the Revolution, independent though it is in home and foreign policy.

The meetings of the national and regional committees had shown that the proposals by the two super-powers for defining their spheres of influence had little connection with the actual state of affairs. It was stated that at the Nixon-Breznev and intergovernmental meetings, the two countries «mark out on a map of the world those areas which they wish to keep within their influence». Nothing could be further from

the truth. Our interpretation of the situation is that each of the super-powers, in pursuit of their foreign policies, know that throughout the world, there are certain sensitive areas in which neither can intervene directly. For this reason they try to avoid direct confrontation in these areas. But if by some error of judgement, or by a deliberate probing operation, there is a confrontation which goes too far, then a red light goes on.

These sensitive areas may change according to the general situation and the balance of power between the two countries. There is a recent example in support of this. A few years ago, the Soviet Union decided that Cuba, even though it was an independent country, should become one of its most important strategic bases. Cuba, therefore, was provided with arms and other forms of aid to the extent of one million dollars per day.

But Kruschev made an error of judgement. Russia wanted to instal rockets with nuclear warheads in Cuba. The American reaction was violent —strong warnings were given, accompanied by the threat of armed conflict should the rockets be installed. Even before they arrived, the Kremlin ordered the ships to turn back.

On the other hand, the Americans, in spite of their technical superiority, were unable to invade Cuba, and she was able to construct a Socialist state on the frontier of the U.S.A. Subsequently, America has done her best to destroy the Cuban revolution and has openly spoken of direct intervention.

Similarly, the Russian interventions in Czechoslovakia in 1968 and in Hungary in 1956 were designed

to eliminate activities hostile to the Soviet block.

All these facts go to prove the accuracy of our assessment and the inaccuracy of the opinions expressed on «spheres of influence». We can well imagine that the Nixon conversations covered the international situation and their respective foreign policies, and that the danger signal went on several times when sensitive areas were touched upon. But both sides were concerned that the situation should not deteriorate to the point that an armed conflict became inevitable; it was in this context that the areas of risk were defined. As a result, there has been progress on European security, on relations between the two Germanies culminating in a Treaty and their joint admission to UNO. The unification of Korea and the Vietnam situation would also have been discussed, and finally, the limitation of nuclear armaments.

It is only by appreciating the many factors which go to influence American policy that one can understand the flexibility of these discussions. We believe that the main factors are as follows:

1. The direct and indirect influence of the Soviet Union on world affairs has been increasing over the past ten years and her diplomatic activity has clearly been successful.

2. Russia has technical superiority in certain areas, which may be expected to become greater in the future. The Americans cannot put into service before 1976 an aircraft which will match the Russian Mig 23.

3. The strength of the strategic position of the Soviet Union has increased over the last two years,

following the end of the Indo-Pakistan conflict, the creation of Bangladesh and the signing of the treaty with Iraq. Her position in the Indian Ocean and the Arabian Gulf was altered; in the Mediterranean, the agreements with Egypt and Syria after the war with Israel in June 1967 were additional positive elements even though they have not lived up to Russian expectations.

4. Oil reserves in the United States are only sufficient for eleven years if the Americans should have to rely entirely on their own resources. They are dependant, therefore, on oil from the Middle East.

5. There is growing hostility towards American policy in the world.

6. The European Community has increased its influence since the admission of the United Kingdom. Greater attention is being given to European unity and to the designing of policies which make it less dependent on the U.S.A. European influence and interests have suffered at the hands of the United States. Thus, in her negotiations with Russia, America is in a weaker position than on previous occasions.

American strategic aims have led to her adopting a more flexible approach to the Soviet Union —witness the Strategic Arms Limitation Treaty. But they are much less flexible when it is a question affecting their vital interests, both in the long and the short term, and when it could threaten their position as a leader of the great powers and the most highly developed country economically in the world. They will not accept the loss of this leading position to the growing strength of the Soviet Union.

We can identify the most important and potentia-

lly explosive area, from the American point of view, by referring to some of the six points on our list, and which go to explain the flexibility of their talks with the Soviet Union. It is clear that the area is that of the whole Middle East, and that the role of the Arab countries in the area will be an increasingly important factor.

We must also be aware that future confrontations between the two super-powers will be in the guise of «intermediary armies». It has already happened and will continue to do so for a long time to come, since we know that a direct confrontation is improbable, if not impossible. The U.S.A. therefore, will use its pawns by providing them with military, economic and political support; likewise, the Soviet Union will support those who are fighting American imperialism.

This must lead us to the conviction that we are designated as one of those who would participate in a confrontation of «intermediaries». We must, therefore, plan our future in such a way that we can guarantee the objectives of the Revolution.

Comrades.

When we consider the fact that the U.S.A. will undoubtedly increase its pressure on the Middle East, we should also remember that, in opposition, the Soviet Union will be doing the same thing.

It is in this context that we should take care not to allow ourselves to become too dependent on outside aid as this could have a paralysing effect on our own actions. We should, on the contrary, remember that, by our own efforts, we have aroused the admiration of the world, and that this should not prevent us from accepting outside aid if we need it to further our

progress; we need have no scruples about this.

In connection with the increased pressure on the area by the U.S.A., we should always bear in mind the following points:

Firstly, to make any concessions would be fatal for the Revolution and would be playing the game of the imperialists, especially the Americans. The challenge which we have thrown down stems from our determination to carry through to completion the plans of the Revolution and of the Party. For this reason, the imperialists are unlikely to accept concessions unless these could help to weaken the movement, or could be instrumental in removing the individuals and organisations who founded it. Even if they should accept them, it would only be for tactical reasons to position themselves better for delivering the coup de grâce.

They will never accept the fact that Iraq should remain in such a strong position that another «July Revolution» could take place. We will respect traditional negotiations and compromises because the Revolution has severed all links with imperialism and its interests. This is the only road which a truly popular revolution can take; any other would be a negation of our principles.

This does not mean that it is not possible to establish a new kind of relationship with imperialist governments if it serves our purpose, as is done by the majority of the socialist régimes. But at the present time, this would be unwise, and can only be considered when the Revolution is permanently established and that the *fait accompli* has been

accepted by the imperialists. Once we reach this point, they will be interested in establishing relations of advantage to both parties and on an equal footing in the normal pattern of international agreements.

This does not necessarily mean that they will abandon their attempts to create dissension in our ranks and they may make a condition of their negotiations that the Revolution should «do penance for its misdeeds». They will continue to try to gain a foothold by tactics of this kind.

It is for these reasons that there must be no concessions from our side.

Secondly, American pressure is likely to be accompanied by considerable flexibility when dealing with certain Arab countries which are not directly within their preserve. Nor do we think either that they will establish close relations with those countries in which they wish to increase their influence.

There are two determining factors which guide American foreign policy in the Middle East:

a) The intransigence of Israel in continuing to pursue her own policies and actions. This has the effect of limiting the amount of flexibility available for negotiating a temporary solution of the Israeli-Arab conflict. Because of these restrictions, the U.S.A. may come to the conclusion that this intransigence together with the continuous provision of aid and support, reduces considerably the area in which they can operate.

b) A continuation of the present situation will enable the Soviet Union to strengthen its presence in

the area. America will, therefore, try to reach pragmatic negotiated solutions even though her long term aims will not have changed.

These new initiatives will have taken into account the following additional points:

1. Israel will not withdraw from all occupied Arab territories.

2. A temporary end to the conflict will be found while giving it the appearance of being the final solution. Israel would be left with the possibility of reoccupying at any time, territories which she has to give up. Thus the door is left open for Israel if events in the area develop in such a way as to threaten American interests. The State of Israel will become the most stable guarantee and ultimate weapon for the protection of their interests.

3. To persuade those Arab states whose territory is under occupation to sign separate agreements, in order to split up the settlement and cause dissension between the Arab people and their governments. This happened previously with the Rogers plan.

If all these plans fail, the U.S.A. must continue to support Israel against the growing military strength of the Arab countries. Nevertheless, at the moment, we believe that it is the time for diplomatic action.

Thirdly, Iraq has never been classified as an American satellite, especially since the July 1958 revolution. Nor was it ever considered to be likely she would become one, even in the long term. There are two reasons for this. One is that, for historical reasons, she was regarded as a British preserve; the other is that

the Iraq people is known for its political awareness and strong revolutionary tendencies. Therefore, since the 1968 revolution, the United States has never included Iraq in its political calculations to the same extent as other Arab countries. We believe that this facilitated the signing of the treaty with the Soviet Union, even though we had only been in power for a short time and had many problems to face. The most important of these were the Kurdish question, our strained relations with Iran, and in addition, other difficulties bearing on Russian strategy.

We said at the beginning of this paper, that it would be necessary to use different means in our conflict with counter-revolutionary forces after having signed the treaty and nationalised the oil industry. We reiterate that these two measures took them by surprise, aborted their plans, and caused them to miscalculate politically and in practice. They were forced to revise their plans and methods since they had failed either to destroy the revolution or to confine it to within the «acceptable limits». In making our new assessment, we must keep in mind two important points:

Firstly, the counter-revolutionaries have, during the last four years, failed to subdue the Revolution. They failed because the leaders of the Party and the Revolution had applied the lessons learned by experience and the setbacks of the past in Iraq and Syria. They also made a miscalculation in that they used the outdated methods of the past, similar to those used previously against the Party and some Third World countries.

We have been successful because we have used the most modern and sophisticated techniques in planning our actions in the hard fight which is going on in the Arab world.

Secondly, the sophistication and novelty of our plans led the imperialists into making errors.

But things will not always be like this. Imperialism will make a reassessment, will change its methods and tactics, check back on its information to discover where the mistakes were made. When it has recovered from the surprise of the Iraqi-Soviet Treaty and the oil nationalisation, it will use every means to set up new alignments, using unexpected allies as a cover for its activites.

What then should be our posture in this new phase of the struggle?

In answering this question, it should be said at the outset, that the pre-nationalisation tactics must be abandoned. They are no longer valid at the present time. They were successful in carrying the Revolution to its present level because they were based upon the age-old tactic of using the «unforeseen path» instead of the «well-trodden road». The paths are no longer «unforeseen». So, if we are to continue with our success, we must set in motion a new strategy, capable of resisting the new plans of imperialism and its allies both inside Iraq and in the area.

If we continue using the methods of the past, successful though they were, the Revolution will be doomed to defeat in the battles to come.

II

We have demonstrated that imperialism has reassessed the situation and will try out new and hitherto unknown methods and tactics to defeat the Revolution.

What then are these hitherto unknown tactics and how will they be used? What should we do on our side?

In studying this, we should not forget our own problems, as they will certainly be exploited by imperialism. We can say categorically that their activities will be based upon:

1. The exploitation of our problems of the past.
2. The creation of new problems and points of friction.

But whether the problems be old or new, the main objective will be to separate the Revolution from the support of the mass of the population. The solidarity of the people with the Revolution has been the

decisive factor in our success; it is therefore clear that the struggle will be centred around gaining the loyalty and support of the people.

We are confident that the counter-revolution will not succeed in winning the loyalty of the people, but we would say that even a loss of enthusiasm for the Revolution and the Party would be a loss for us and a gain for imperialism.

Among the problems of the past which could be exploited by imperialism, there are two which could be used to divide the nation, namely, the Kurdish problem, and clan or community loyalty (tribal, ethnic, religious, etc.). In seeking to make use of these, it will use new techniques to give them life, and they will appear in a new guise because circumstances have changed. This will be one of the «unforeseen tactics» in the arsenal of imperialism.

But what is new about the Kurdish question? It seems to us that the main difference is that it has now been transformed into an Iraqi problem. From having previously been a struggle by the Kurds for their national rights, it has now become a struggle by «Iraqis (Kurds, Arabs and all minorities, political and ethnic), against the oppression, terrorism and anarchy of the Ba'th Party». This is what the propaganda of the imperialists is saying, proclaimed under the banner of «democracy for Iraq, autonomy for Kurdistan».

This change has taken place because it appears that the claim for Kurdish national rights is not, in itself, sufficient to drum up a support which could destroy our régime. Furthermore, Iraq's success in establishing new and wider international relationships

will tend to put the Kurdish problem into isolation if it continues to agitate in the same old way. So it is being drawn into the wider political arena and made a part of the «defence of democracy and individual liberty» which is under threat.

Attempts will be made to unite all «progressive movements» to oppose «personal power and dictatorship etc.», and thus to sow unrest and confusion in the ranks of those supporting the Revolution within Iraq and abroad.

As far as the problem of clan and community loyalty is concerned, the new technique will be that of trying to introduce friction in this field, and even amongst members of the Party and the Revolution. By so doing, imperialism could, through the acts of some individuals, strike at the very heart of the Revolution and its ideology.

There are other outstanding problems which could be exploited, amongst which are those of our frontiers with Saudi Arabia and Jordan, as well as the current disputes with Iran and Kuwait.

But of all the many new methods which will be used in attempting to destroy the Revolution, apart from those we have mentioned, there are two important factors:

Firstly, there will be attempts to portray the progress and success of the revolution as being disastrous failures, in order to undermine its credibility and so provide «logical» reasons for persuading the people to withdraw support for the Revolution and Party. Serious damage to the Party's morale would be the result. The growth of separate factions

would be encouraged and dissension could start over the approach to certain problems and to their solutions.

Here is an example of the way in which the Labour Code and the law on Social Security could be exploited. It could be used as a means of creating «anarchy, the repudiation of work contracts, ignoring administrative measures required for increasing production and the material requirements of the country». At the same time, workers might be persuaded that the «Revolution has failed to keep its promises to the working class and is not applying the Labour Code».

The Charter for National Action could be represented as being «another means by which the Communist Party takes over key positions, yet that it was because of this Party that the Iraqi people underwent numerous disasters». This would encourage the re-emergence of the religious reactionaries, would separate the Revolution from some of its Independent supporters and from the Nationalist Current, which still remembers its former hard relations with the Communist Party and the complexes which resulted. Concurrently, attempts could be made to create situations which would block the plans of the National Front, in order to show its want of good faith and to prolong the quarrels between the various progressive and nationalistic movements.

Imperialism may also try to prove that the oil nationalisation, our most authentic revolutionary measure, has been «an economic and financial disaster» and that the austerity regulations which we have introduced to protect the economy are «a heavy

burden on the people and a form of extortion by the Government».

Similarly the manifesto of March 11th. 1970 on the Kurdish problem could be represented as «an abandonment of our national sovereignty», thereby giving encouragement to all those who are in opposition to the measure, and, more seriously, causing concern to all Kurdish people and to the Kurdish Democratic Party by claiming that the «Ba'th Party would be unlikely to implement their proposals».

Secondly, imperialism may disguise itself under the colours of «Arab nationalism», and attack the Revolution from adjacent countries. Nothing could suit their purpose better than the Palestinian problem. By proposing political, or even military solutions for the Israeli-Arab conflict, and by generating «greater efforts in support of Palestine», it could increase friction within the Party and encourage the formation of dissident groups. Once these internal quarrels were under way, a vast campaign of slander against the Party and the Revolution would be mounted.

We must realise that the classic counter-revolutionary procedure of «a military coup d'état, a communiqué over the radio» cannot be used in Iraq, and that the first priority will be that of eroding the Party from within. For this, there will be formulae and negotiation proposals on subjects designed to divide the leadership and subsequently the entire Party. Amongst these, will certainly appear the Kurdish question, Palestine, and law no. 69 on oil nationalisation, etc.

This tactic is known as that of the «paralysed

Party»; deprived of its vitality and competence for governing the country as a result of its internal disputes, the situation will revert to exactly those of previous confrontations in Syria and Iraq in 1963 and 1966.

What then is to be done?

In facing these tactics and having those problems which could be exploited to damage the Revolution, it is obvious that we must find appropriate counter-measures. But making the statement is not enough; we must work out detailed tactics to cope with all these situations, including those which imperialism may invent. At the same time, we must recognise that a «static defence» is inadequate for defending the Revolution against current and future threats.

The tactic of «defence by attack» in its various forms remains the most effective way of doing this. It means that there is no hard and fast rule to be applied at all times and in all situations, and we should leave complete liberty to our leaders to choose the appropriate method in each situation.

We will now deal individually with some of these problems, not necessarily in their order of importance, in order to give more helpful answers to this question of what we should do.

Firstly, our answer to the attempts to create dissension in the Party, is to have wider and more thorough discussions of all problems. These debates must take place in as a democratic atmosphere as possible; all attempts at bargaining must be avoided and our objective should be that of trying to work out the best solution to each problem. We shall conduct these debates with patience and tolerance, and will not take account of individuals' degree of patriotism, nationalism or left-wing positions. At the same time, we reserve the right to criticise freely and fearlessly, in the Party tradition, those who express a personal point of view or whose views are in contradiction with the key decisions already taken by the Party.

Secondly, on Palestine, we have said that the United States will play a leading role in putting forward «solutions». But if these proposals are to be convincing, they must enjoy a «favourable» environment, and what could be better than that of despair and demoralisation?

In our decisions, we must take account of several important factors:

a) The new American policy of «flexible sincerity» in the Middle East will not meet Syria's minimum requirements. For Israeli military reasons, the Golan Heights question is difficult to resolve. Therefore, Syria will be forced to intensify military activity on Israeli frontiers until such time as international opinion recognises that a solution in Sinai and the Jordanian West Bank is an incomplete one. Syria's attitude will hinder attempts at a partial settlement by bilateral negotiation between Israel and an Arab

country. For the Syrian government knows that a solution to Sinai and the West Bank would take the Golan Heights off the centre of the Arab and international stage, and that keeping silent about it would not lead to a solution. Keeping silent would also put Syria into an embarrassing position with Iraq since the régime governs in the name of the Ba'th Party. The only way by which it could extricate itself would be for Iraq to «withdraw from the fight» and for the United States to make a relevant «flexible» proposal. America could suggest a partial withdrawal by Israel and a demilitarisation of the zone in a way which would allow Israel to re-occupy easily at any time.

b) The Soviet Union has supplied arms to Arab governments, but wishes, nevertheless, to play the main part in arriving at a «peaceful and honourable» solution. This shift in Russian policy undoubtedly follows on the deterioration of Russo-Egyptian relations, even though they continue to supply Egypt with weapons, (which gives occasion for some Arab countries to criticise the Soviet Union). But if the solutions to the conflict were far apart from the «honourable» form which they envisage, they might be less enthusiastic and might change their attitude.

c) From the purely military point of view, the areas under occupation are not, strategically, more important than some unoccupied areas. From the purely political point of view, these areas are no better than the others. For example, it would be illogical to consider Haifa and Jaffa as being more important than Kirkuk and Basra, or that the bargaining potential of the Sinai peninsula was

higher than that of the three Arab islands, recently annexed by Iran, or of the Shatt-al-Arab, or the whole Arabian Gulf. But in terms of imperialism's designs, it is correct, for in practical terms their power bases are a complete unity.

Compared with other occupied Arab countries, Palestine and the occupied territories are a special case. Its most important element is that the long struggle for the liberation of Palestine has been, since the 1940s, the ideological force behind the nationalist movement. Freedom for Palestine has been, and is, the most well known slogan known to the mass of the Arab people; for this reason, they know more about the people, history and background of Palestine than of any other Arab country. The struggle for the liberation of Palestine has, therefore, taken on the characteristics of «defence by attack». By the threats to liberate the occupied areas, they are acting in the defence of other Arab territory. If it were to be accepted that the occupation of Palestine was a permanent fact, the plan for an «Israel extending from the Nile to the Euphrates» would become feasible, and we can imagine what methods would be used in this contingency.

All of this, however, should not lead us into courses of action which would endanger the Revolution, or expose us to the threat of occupation by foreign troops, a situation which, in practice, would be as serious as an equivalent Israeli occupation. On the other hand, these considerations must not prevent us from playing our full role in opposing the enemy. Our policy should consist of «a balanced, practical and clear appreciation of the political and military situa-

tion and should be based upon our principles». In carrying this out, we must remember that:

a) A neutral attitude is not positive, and in our case, could be regarded as tantamount to defeatism and irresponsibility (to say the least). Similarly, the use of a mounting crescendo of words which, even in the past, was ridiculous, is today something which can only be described as idiotic.

b) Our Party is part of the Arab Revolution, not solely for the liberation of Palestine (as some may suppose in moments of patriotic euphoria). The Palestinian cause not central to our struggle as a Party, but the Ba'th is also the Party of the Arab Revolution. The consolidation and development of the Iraqi revolution will be an important step on the long road towards the liberation of Palestine.

This does not mean that we stand aside from events, for this would be of little help in preventing Iraq and the Revolution from falling prey to Israel later on.

In standing apart from the shouting match and by realising that the Revolution cannot fight on several fronts, we should not forget that we have a number of tasks to carry out, some of the most important being:

— the uncompromising rejection of all defeatist proposals;

— emphasis on the fact that any participation in large scale military action depends upon agreement on a common strategy and the leaving of no loopholes for withdrawal by any participant once the battle has started. It would require the provision of supplies and manpower while at the same time, ensuring the security of Iraq and the Revolution. We must have

been able to have settled all those problems which could adversely affect our participation, otherwise we will find ourselves incapable of carrying through our political and military aims.

Our own commitment, in the current political situation, is that we cannot despatch strong military forces abroad, particularly since we have no guarantee that they would be employed in the way which we consider right for the advancement of the Arab struggle. But this situation is bound to change. Any major alteration or development in those areas which are now hindering our participation, would enable us to make a new assessment and review the question of sending our forces abroad.

In any event, if for these reasons we cannot make an effective military contribution, it does not mean that we should do nothing on the political and diplomatic front.

We must maintain our contacts with other Arab progressive movements and with those countries opposed to a defeatist solution, especially with the Soviet Union. In this way, by increasing our military and financial support to the Palestine resistance, we can prevent these «solutions» from coming to fruition.

— The policies of today of the Arab countries, especially of Syria and Egypt, are, in the light of their military strength, insufficient to compel Israel to quit the occupied territories.

— Arab military strategy today is following strictly classical lines, and is no way superior to that of Israel, —it takes no account of such elementary facts as «the part to be played by the masses, by Arab unity, by the use of oil as a weapon, by the

Palestinian resistance movement». In the final analysis, this strategy suits Israel very well and puts her in a more favourable position than the Arab countries.

— Conditions are bad in the Middle East, and as mentioned earlier, particularly unfavourable for us. In our opinion, there is more than once way of remedying this situation.

— It is imperative that the Arab countries should not be humiliated by the imposition of a Pax Americana, and this will demand considerable effort on our part and could be of decisive importance. It demands in addition, that we must build a socio-political system which will be an example for the whole area, based upon real national unity and the exploitation of oil as a weapon.

Thirdly, as mentioned, by its historic decision to nationalise all the operations of the Iraq Petroleum Company, Iraq placed itself in an important position on the Arab and international scene. A new internal situation was created also, over and above the revolutionary and economic impact of the decree in itself. It had, in fact, considerable psychological and political consequences. Its impact took two dimensions —an economic one and a psycho-political one—, and it is important that we should maintain a balance between these two as we make forward progress. Too great an emphasis on either one of these two dimensions could harm the Revolution and face us with the kind of problems which we have always tried to avoid.

For example, if we were to act on purely economic considerations in trying to surmount the difficulties facing us in trying to sell our oil, and thereby ensure

the commercial success of nationalisation, and in doing so gave the impression that we were making concessions, we would destroy the psycho-political effect of nationalisation. Imperialism would then seize upon the opportunity of posing as the champion of nationalisation in opposition to our policy which had led us to «encirclement and retreat».

Conversely, by emphasising the political aspects at the expense of the economic, we have to take care that nationalisation is not presented as an «economic disaster».

To preserve a proper balance, we should base our calculations on the expectation that the worst will happen and what this therefore might involve. We should even consider the declaration of a state of emergency in order to give ourselves a two year breathing space. We should remember that all courageous acts, such as nationalisation, require special action and sacrifice if they are to be successfully carried through.

We should not regard lightly an adversary such as the Oil Cartel, nor should we think that victory can be cheaply bought.

Our Party leaders have already shown their courage by the nationalisation of the oil industry, and will do so again whatever the circumstances may be. In practical terms, this means that, in the negotiations with the oil companies, our Party must consider all these facts in playing its part to serve better the interests of our people.

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